

PRESS RELEASE

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Carmella Childs, of Sacramento, Calif., was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb to three years of probation, with six months of home confinement, for conspiring to defraud various banks as part of a credit card cash withdrawal scheme. Childs pleaded guilty to this charge on September 11, 2008.

From June 5, 2007, to June 8, 2007, Childs and others conspired to defraud a number of banks in the Janesville, Wis. area. As part of the conspiracy, they entered various banks, presented credit cards in their own names, and requested help obtaining cash advances. When the transactions were initially denied (because of insufficient funds), they offered to call, or have bank personnel call, a toll-free number on the back of the cards to verify there was, indeed, sufficient money available in the account.

Instead of reaching a legitimate bank employee, however, the call went to an unknown co-conspirator who provided the tellers with information to allow the transaction to be completed. In total, the scheme defrauded three banks of \$23,000. Childs was ordered to repay the banks the \$23,000 loss as a condition of her probation .

The charges against Childs were the result of an investigation conducted by the Janesville Police Department and the U.S. Secret Service. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Ehlke.

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